

Shurt

F

1015

189

*The Kind  
of Old Countrymen  
Canada can Absorb*

BY

DAVID GRIEVE TUCKWELL

123005



*Shurt Library*

JUL 16 '54



DAVID GRIEVE TUCKWELL

(FORMERLY MAYOR  
OF LLOYDMINSTER AND ORGANIZER OF  
MUNICIPAL HOSPITAL DISTRICTS  
FOR THE  
PROVINCE OF SASKATCHEWAN)

# *The Kind of Old Countrymen Canada can Absorb*

By

DAVID GRIEVE TUCKWELL.

---

"Oh, Canada! beneath thy shining skies  
May stalwart sons and gentle daughters rise  
To keep thee steadfast through the years"

---

As the writer was leaving Victoria about two years ago for a visit to his old home in England after a residence in Canada of more than twenty years, Baron Byng of Vinny, one of England's great pro-Consuls, was bidding farewell to the people amongst whom he had been residing as King George's Vice-Regent during the preceding five years.

A gathering of distinguished citizens had assembled to bid their Excellencies Lord and Lady Byng farewell, and in speeding the parting guests to assure them of Canada's undying regard for the occupants of the British throne, and of their ardent desire that the ties—so intangible and yet so firm—which bind the Empire together might be strengthened and made more durable with the passing of the years.

It was an inspiration at that gathering to listen to a large group of Victoria school children lifting up their voices in the glad refrain of Canada's National Anthem:—

"How dear to us thy broad domain,  
Thou land of hope for all who toil;  
We stand on guard for thee!"

The industrial situation in Great Britain and the imperative need in Canada of a largely increased agricultural population, would seem to indicate, despite the sharp conflicts of opinion as to the methods to be adopted, that a wider, saner policy of immigration is essential to the future prosperity of both countries.

It has seemed to the writer that possibly undue emphasis has been placed upon the insistence of previous agricultural experience from those who would take up farming in this country, as most of the outstanding successes with whom he has been brought into personal contact, during an experience of many years in five of the provinces of Canada, have been men who, alert, open-minded, industrious, and willing to learn, have adapted themselves to their new environment much more readily than the rule-of-thumb men, trained to vastly different methods of farming in the Old Land.

Talking with the late Hon. John Oliver a few days prior to sailing, and enquiring from that gentleman if he had any message that he would like to be carried from an Englishman to Englishmen, that gentleman, who had himself won his way through from the position of a penniless emigrant to become Prime Minister of his province, replied: "You may tell your people from me, that to the man of fairly good health, of steady habits, of industrious disposition, who is willing to adapt himself to circumstances, there is, in my opinion, no country on earth that offers more inducements, holds out more hope, than does this great Dominion of Canada. I have dug in a ditch for my living," continued Mr. Oliver, "and considered myself just as good a man in that position, as I am to-day sitting in the Premier's chair. There is no disgrace in any honest toil."

A few notable examples will be set forth in this series of articles, dealing with the characters and careers of men whom the writer has known, who came out to this country, unknown, unhonored, and unsung, who by their energy and industry have become "The pillars of their districts, hopes, the centres of widespread desires."

The writer needs not to apologize in dealing with the condition of these men on their arrival in this country. He himself came out as an emigrant, slept on the upper slats of a Colonist car from Montreal to Winnipeg, from which his bones are aching yet; secured what rest he could whilst reclining on the floor of a rooming house during his

first week or two in the Manitoba capital, owing to the lack of the wherewithal to pay for a bedroom in advance, eventually becoming a newspaper owner and Mayor of his town; and incidentally may here and now affirm that at no time, or place, or in any manner has he ever received anything save kindly consideration and hearty goodwill from the Canadian people.

His conclusions must not be considered as reflecting in any way, or as at all disparaging of his fellow-countrymen—no true-born Englishman who knows anything of his country's history can ever feel anything other than proud and grateful and reverent towards his Motherland, however warmly he comes to feel for the land of his adoption; neither are they to be considered as unduly laudatory of Canadian hospitality and friendship, but are merely intended to show that the Englishman of the right type, whatever he may lack, given a stout heart, strong hands, and a fair opportunity, is more than likely to become a very valuable asset to the land in which he may cast his lot.

There are readers of this article who could doubtless tell the writer more about farming in five minutes than the writer will know at the end of his career; and yet the time is well within the memory of the writer when the early settlers of the Lloydminster district were compelled to bring in their grain and other produce from twenty to fifty miles by bullock team, receiving 15 cents a bushel for oats, from 50 cents to 65 cents for wheat, whilst having managed to fatten a few hogs for the butcher they were lucky to receive the princely sum of from 3 cents to 5 cents per lb. at the end of their thirty-mile trip, so that possibly we may be inclined to magnify the hardships, the isolation, and scant return for his labor incidental to the farmer's lot to-day.

The settlers were entirely at the mercy of the line elevator men, the machine men, and dozens of other avaricious agencies seeking to despoil them of the scant returns from their herculean efforts. To-day practically every settler owns his automobile and motortruck, the telephone is universal throughout

the provinces, the radio is installed in many country homes, giving first-hand information relating to market prices from day to day, and in hundreds and thousands of cases where a few years ago the unfortunate settlers were little better than hewers of wood and drawers of water for their many overlords to whom they were indebted, to-day they have arrived at, or are within measurable distance of economic independence.

## ENGLISHMEN OF VARIOUS TYPES

There is a type of Englishman who appears to shut himself up in an impenetrable reserve suggestive of the "Ice Age." So far as he is concerned, the world can "go to blazes," or any other destination to which it cares to direct its path, and it will be no concern of his.

There is another, and a more objectionable type, somewhat insular in spirit, and narrow of outlook, who appears to imagine that "the way they do things in Hengland" is the standard for the world, and that the new-comer from the Motherland is to find his God-given destiny in setting the world to rights.

In the course of more than thirty years, active journalistic work in Canada and Australia, before leaving a similar occupation in the Old Country, the writer has been brought into close touch with many of his fellow-countrymen who have been handicapped and hindered by this unfortunate characteristic—the exasperating tendency of protesting that "They didn't do things like this in the Old Country."

There is still another type of Englishman, the saving salt of his race, who sees, marks, learns and inwardly digests. This type does not, to paraphrase friend Kipling, attempt to "Kill Kruger with his mouth." He does not shut himself up in a cloister of his own icy reserve, nor does he attempt to impose his views in an objectionable manner upon those with whom he may have to do. And it is this type of Englishman, the open-minded, the clear-headed, the hard-working, the stout-hearted,

the neighborly-dispositioned Englishman, who may be found in all parts of the far-flung British Empire, that this and subsequent articles will have to deal.

### "STEADY, BOYS, STEADY!"

It is recorded of the Great Iron Duke of Wellington, that, when testifying to a friend regarding the respective qualities of the troops serving under him in his various campaigns, he had to admit that bold and impetuous as were the Highland battalions in leading a charge; fierce and irresistible as were the Irish when the battle was fairly launched; when the hard fought day was waning and the fighting spirit spent, it was the steadiness of the English infantry upon which he could most confidently rely.

Steady, plodding, bull-dog tenacity of purpose has marked the characters of the men who will be found featured in this series. Englishmen who by their adaptability, resoluteness of purpose, and steady application to the business in hand have been able to climb by slow degrees, and more and more, from their lowly positions as penniless emigrants, to the very summit of power and influence in their various communities, or have in one direction or another achieved distinction and won a more than local esteem.

### REMODELLING OF A BUCKINGHAMSHIRE DRAPER

When resident in Yorkton, some years ago, as Editor of the Weekly Times of that community, there came one day into the writer's office a bronzed and rugged farmer from the Springside District, a farming centre of considerable note a few miles away.

The writer had been manager of a daily paper in Australia for some years, and a considerable time had elapsed since he could by any possibility have seen this man; and yet there was something strangely familiar about the cut of the features of this horny-handed follower of the plough, and when in transacting some business he signed his name as "Henry Turner," there instantly recurred to the mind of the writer, the form of a smart, dapper, yet

somewhat anaemic-looking draper and clothier of the same name who formerly conducted a store in Aylesbury, his native Buckinghamshire town. Could this bronzed, sturdy, well-set-up son of the soil be the same man who had served the writer with collars and cuffs in the far-off days of his youth? And a few leading questions elicited the fact that this was verily indeed the case.

Hearing the "Call of the West" in his English home, not without some measure of trepidation, doubtless, Mr. Turner had dropped his cloth yard-stick, had emigrated to Canada, taken up farming and had become in a few years one of the outstanding agriculturists of the district. He was at the time the writer met him, Reeve of his municipality, active in every worthy enterprise seeking the uplift of the community with which he had become identified; held in the highest esteem all over that part of Saskatchewan, ever ready to accept the full measure of responsibility, as well as claim the attendant privileges of citizenship.

It may not be advisable, generally speaking, to drop the cloth yard-stick of a men's furnishing store for the bullock-yoke and whiffle-tree of a pioneer farm, but in the case of Henry Turner of Springside, if Buckinghamshire lost an indifferent draper, Canada has secured a mighty good farmer, and a real man's man has found his place in the sun.

## STATESMEN MET TO DO THIS FARMER HONOR

The writer owned and edited the Lloydminster Times for a period of five years, during three years of which time he was Mayor of the town, famous as being the centre of the Barr Colony Settlement. Two thousand English people came out to Canada in one party and located not far from the North Saskatchewan River, midway between Saskatoon and Edmonton.

It has been universally admitted that this was a badly conceived and wretchedly organized undertaking. Many of the women had been delicately nurtured and were unused to hardship, whilst very



few of the newcomers possessed any experience of farming. The ignorance of these misguided settlers was indeed of such an appalling nature, that legends innumerable remain to this day, after the lapse of a quarter of a century, setting forth the efforts of those endeavoring to fit very square pegs into impossibly round holes.

The Colonists had to trek overland from Saskatoon, some two hundred miles, through sloughs and over rude miry prairie trails in the early spring of the year. They were beset by harpies of every description, seeking to unload worthless farming junk upon these ignorant new-comers. Many were sick, and most were sad before reaching their destination. And yet from such an unlikely commencement, with everything apparently making for a blundering disaster, one of the most successful and flourishing mixed farming districts in Western Canada has been built up.

As an indication of the growing importance in which this Lloydminster district is held to-day, it may be mentioned that a great national Co-operative Convention was held there this past summer at which delegates were present from all over Canada, as well as from the Old Country. Mayor Harold Huxley is a living and shining example of the manner in which Englishmen of the right type are able to adapt themselves to strange circumstances, and hold their own in the best company in the world. Mr. Huxley came out with the original Barr Colony, he had had no previous experience of farming, but by steady application and dogged perseverance in the face of almost insurmountable obstacles, not to mention many disastrous experiences, has become the first citizen of this community, holding his high office now for several years.

Amongst his many activities Mr. Huxley is secretary of the Lloydminster Agricultural Association, whose Annual Exhibition is one of the best organized and most widely known in the whole of Western Canada.

During the writer's sojourn in Lloydminster a banquet was tendered to one of these Barr Colonists,

by the name of J. C. Hill. The then Premier of Saskatchewan, Hon. Walter Scott, Hon. George Langley, another Saskatchewan Cabinet Minister, the Members of Parliament for the district, and many other notable guests of the Lloydminster Board of Trade were met to do honor to this old Barr Colonist who had just achieved the signal distinction of capturing for the third year in succession the Colorado Trophy valued at \$1,500.00 as the grower of the champion oats on the continent of America.

In open competition with the foremost agriculturists of the world, this Lloydminster farmer had held his own and carried off this great award, and his fellow-citizens had met at the banquet table to celebrate the occasion.

And here again, as in the case of Henry Turner of Springside, an Englishman, and a Londoner to boot, without any previous experience of the farm, had come out to a strange land, had endured all the privations and hardships attendant upon the pioneer homesteader's lot, and by his indomitable energy and persistent effort, had won through not to a middling success, but to a veritable triumph over adverse circumstances.

For J. C. Hill was an old soldier. He had gone out as sergeant of artillery with Lord Roberts in his famous march to Kandahar; was just about as familiar with agriculture and conditions on the farm as a South Sea Islander would be of the traffic regulations of Piccadilly Circus. And yet out of such unlikely material, by years of persistent effort and "stick-at-it" determination, this old soldier, who had turned his sword into a ploughshare, had developed into the successful Canadian farmer whom a premier was pleased to honor by his presence and his praise.

### THIS MAN WISE IN COW SENSE

Canada's representative at the Royal Dairy Cattlemen's Convention in England in 1928 was Mr. H. C. Thomas, another old Barr Colonist.

Mr. Thomas worked in the London Metropolitan area as a stationary engineer, and knew just about as much concerning cows as a crocodile does of Christian Ethics. As showing something of the character, however, which has raised him to such eminence in his new profession as a cattleman, it may be mentioned that he was wont as a young man to travel from London to Wycombe in Buckinghamshire, about thirty miles, on his old-fashioned bicycle whilst trying to induce the young lady who eventually became his bride to accept his name and share his fortunes for better or for worse.

By intense application and wise selection Mr. Thomas has built up one of the finest herds of pure-bred Ayrshire cattle to be found in the Dominion of Canada—his large silos and up-to-date barns, where everything is handled with the minimum of labor, a development in which his engineering experience has been a valuable factor, being one of the show places of the Lloydminster district.

Mr. Thomas has been a consistent exhibitor and prolific prize-winner at cattle shows throughout the West, and the Dominion Government some years ago recognizing his value, appointed him as demonstrator and recorder for cow testing purposes, and he is now employed in that capacity, journeying from one end of Saskatchewan to the other, organizing, lecturing, demonstrating, and by his devoted efforts the dairymen of that province are rapidly improving the quality of their herds. If the man who succeeded in making two blades of grass to grow where but one grew before, has been deemed worthy of his country's praise, then certainly the man whose efforts have been devoted to securing two gallons of milk where only one has been hitherto yielded is not to be ignored when the honors are passing round.

A man of broad vision, Mr. Thomas is President of the Ayrshire Cattlemen's Association of Saskatchewan, and his book, with the somewhat quaint title of "Cow Sense," published some time ago, has had a very wide circulation.